

Message Text

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FOR RPO; STATE FOR CU/EE; USIA FOR ICS/DA, IEU; LONDON
FOR RRU

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC, BU (POHL, FREDERIK)

SUBJECT: VOLSPKR

1. SUMMARY: POHL'S VISIT PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR SEVERAL
USEFUL DISCUSSIONS, BUT WAS LESS THAN FULLY SATISFYING. END
SUMMARY.

2. AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITER/EDITOR FREDERIK POHL
VISITED SOFIA OCT 15-19. OUR HOPE WAS THAT POHL WOULD MEET
WITH VARIETY OF BULGARIANS FOR EXCHANGES ON THE MANY TOPICS
HE COULD HANDLE: SCIENCE FICTION AS LITERATURE, AMERICAN
LITERATURE IN GENERAL, FUTUROLOGY, BOOK EDITING AND PUBLISH-
ING. WE ALSO HOPED COMBINE POHL'S PRESENCE WITH SCIENCE
FICTION FILMS TO ARRANGE AT LEAST ONE INFORMAL EVENING AT
P&C OFFICER'S HOME, TO LEARN WHETHER IN POST-CSCE
ATMOSPHERE BULGARIANS CAN ACCEPT SUCH INVITATIONS.

3. OUR HOPES WERE NOT FULLY SATISFIED, BECAUSE
POHL'S VISIT (AS ALL SIMILAR VISITS) HAD TO BE ARRANGED

THROUGH GOB MINISTERIAL-LEVEL COMMITTEE FOR ART AND
CULTURE, AND COMMITTEE FAILED TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON
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SEVERAL OF EMBASSY'S SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING. IT

SUPPLIED SCHEDULE FOR POHL AND NAMES OF CONTACTS SO LATE (AFTER HE HAD ALREADY ARRIVED) THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE INFORMAL SESSION. SINCE COMMITTEE U.S. DESK OFFICER KNEW HWY WE WISHED LIST OF CONTACTS, FOOT-DRAGGING MAY HAVE BEEN CONSCIOUS DESIRE TO STYMIE OUR ADDITIONAL EFFORTS, RATHER THAN BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY. (IRONICALLY, HIGHER-LEVEL COMMITTEE OFFICIAL, IN PROTOCOL MEETING WITH POHL, SUGGESTED SEVERAL ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES ALONG LINES WE HAD EARLIER SUGGESTED WHILE U.S. DESK OFFICER SAT BY SILENTLY; IT WAS TOO LATE BY THEN.)

4. POHL MET WITH EIGHT MEMBERS OF UNION OF BULGARIAN WRITERS FOR TWO-WAY DISCUSSION OF U.S. AND BULGARIAN SCIENCE FICTION AND WITH FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS OF ENGLISH PHILOLOGY CHAIR AT SOFIA UNIVERSITY'S WESTERN PHILOLOGY FACULTY FOR DISCUSSION OF AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION AND ACADEMIC INTEREST IN IT. HE ALSO HAD TWO PRIVATE SESSIONS WITH A TRANSLATOR OF AMERICAN WORKS, WAS INTERVIEWED FOR THE WRITERS' UNION'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER AND A LOCAL SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, AND MET OFFICIALS OF A MAJOR PUBLISHING HOUSE TO RECOMMEND AMERICAN WORKS FOR POSSIBLE TRANSLATION AND PUBLICATION. AT ALL SESSIONS HE WAS VERY GOOD AT BROADENING HIS TOPIC TO DISCUSS ALSO GENERAL U.S. FICTION.

5. WHILE NOT MEETING OUR EXPECTATIONS, POHL'S VISIT WAS USEFUL IN ACQUAINTING SELECTED BULGARIANS WITH LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE (NOT ONLY SCIENCE FICTION). WE HOPE SOMETHING TANGIBLE WILL RESULT, IN FORM OF ADDITIONAL LOCAL TRANSLATIONS OF U.S. BOOKS. AND AS WITH ALL VISITORS, POHL'S PRESENCE HELPED EXPAND EMBASSY'S CONTACTS. WE HOPE FUTURE VISITOR IN AMERICAN LITERATURE WILL HELP US BUILD UPON THIS BASE.
FELDMAN

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